

# **CONSTITUTION OF WERRINGTON AREA FORUM (NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM)**

## **1. NAME AND AREA**

The name of the Forum shall be Werrington Area Forum. The area covered by Werrington Area Forum is seen in Appendix 1 and will be referred to as Werrington Neighbourhood Area.

## **2. PURPOSE, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

Werrington Area Forum is established for the express purpose of promoting and improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of Werrington Neighbourhood Area.

The aims and objectives of the Neighbourhood Forum are to:

- Prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for Werrington Neighbourhood Area.
- Identify ways, in consultation with relevant authorities and organisations, of involving the whole community in the preparation of the Plan and gathering, analysing and presenting their views and opinions to ensure the Plan is as comprehensive and inclusive as possible.
- Work closely with Peterborough City Council and other relevant organisations in the preparation of the Plan.
- Take responsibility for planning, budgeting and monitoring expenditure on the production of the Neighbourhood Plan and associated projects, including possible sources of funding
- Ensure the Plan conforms to local and national policies.
- Ensure the Forum shall not be affiliated to any political party or organisation.

## **3 POWERS**

The Forum's ultimate decision taking authority comes from the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and other open meetings. These meetings in turn provide legitimacy to the Forum Steering Group and the plans which they and/or steering task and working groups may develop.

In furtherance of its aims and objectives Werrington Area Forum is empowered to:

- Produce a neighbourhood plan on behalf of the community.
- Seek to maintain a Neighbourhood Forum website giving details of the Forum, including a map of the Neighbourhood Area and their contact details.
- Undertake the financial management of the Forum including raising funds as necessary for its activities, by grant, donation or any other appropriate means to finance the work of the Forum, and to open a bank account to manage such funds.
- Organise open meetings or other equivalent events, including an Annual General Meeting (AGM), to which all Forum members will be invited.
- Establish a Steering Group in pursuance of the Forum's aims and objectives.
- Take any form of action that is lawful, which is necessary to achieve the aims and objectives of the Forum including taking out of any contracts which it may see fit.
- Publicise and promote the work of the Forum and organise meetings, training courses, events or seminars etc.
- Work with groups of a similar nature and exchange information, advice and knowledge with them, including cooperation with other voluntary bodies, charities, statutory and non-statutory organisations
- Employ staff and volunteers as are necessary to conduct activities to meet the aims and objectives of the Forum.

## **4. MEMBERSHIP**

The Forum will comprise of at least 21 individuals who live or work in Werrington Neighbourhood Area or who are elected members of the City Council whose area falls within Werrington. Members must be over 16 years of age. Members shall be drawn from different parts and different sections of the community of Werrington. These will be known as Full members and will have full voting rights.

Associate membership is open to individuals who do not live or work within Werrington Neighbourhood Area but has an interest in assisting the Forum to achieve its aims and objectives. Associate membership does not carry voting rights.

All members of the Forum have a duty to declare at application stage and at every Annual General Meeting any financial interest or associations through party political or other organisations, employment or land ownership that could have an impact on their or the Forum's work. These records will be held by the Secretary.

## **5. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND OTHER MEETINGS**

The AGM will be called annually with at least 10 working days notice by informing all Forum members by the last known email address, by notices placed on the Forum's website and facebook page and by a notice placed on the Werrington Village Centre noticeboard.

At each AGM:

- a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected by Full members. Only Full Members can stand in these positions.
- the Treasurer will provide a set of independently examined accounts for the Forum.
- the Forum shall elect a Steering Group by means of a majority vote to undertake the day to day work of the Forum. The AGM has the power to both elect, and remove by a vote of no confidence any member of the Steering Group.

The Forum will hold at least three other open meetings annually.

The Chairman will ensure that the business of each meeting is transacted in an orderly and respectful way. In the absence of the Chairman, another Full Member of the Forum shall be appointed to chair the meeting. The Forum endeavours to make decisions by consensus, but in the case of a vote, decisions are made by a simple majority of those present and entitled to vote and will be determined by a show of hands. When the vote is tied, the Chair of the meeting will have the casting vote. Open Forum meetings and the AGM will be quorate if at least 25% or six members (whichever is the highest) are present.

All meetings shall be minuted. These minutes together with reports from the Steering and Task Groups shall be publically available on request, published on the Forum's website and on Werrington library's noticeboard and reported to Werrington Neighbourhood Council. A summary of the Forums' work will be published in Spotlight, the community newsletter.

## **6. FORUM STEERING GROUP**

The Steering Group will meet not less than once every 8 weeks. More frequent meetings may be held as the Steering Group sees fit to meet the workload demands that pertain at the time.

The Steering Group exists to

- Co-ordinate, implement and monitor the work of the Forum
- Prioritise, schedule and publicise this work
- Receive and consider reports from the relevant Task or Working Groups
- Establish policies, procedures and frameworks

The Steering Group is a working committee made up of Forum Members initially elected at the founding Open Meeting and subsequently at any Forum meeting by a majority vote. Only full members of the Forum may stand for the Steering Group and should be nominated by at least one Forum member.

Steering Group members to be elected at the inaugural meeting and subsequent AGMs are Chair, Secretary, Treasurer plus at least three Open Place members.

The Steering Group shall elect its own Chair and note taker from its members

Non-voting Forum members with specialist skills may be co-opted onto the Steering Group.

The Steering Group shall report back to each Forum meeting.

The Steering Group may set up Task or Working Groups and co-opt members for the specific projects or tasks to be undertaken. These will meet as determined by the nature of the task or project and timetable they are responsible for. These will report back to the Steering Group.

The Steering Group will liaise with relevant bodies such as Locality, community support groups, relevant business associations, the local authorities and elected members of the City Council whose area falls within Werrington.

Steering Group decision making will be consensus or by a majority vote. Steering Group meetings will be declared quorate with 50% or more of Steering Group members in attendance.

## **7. FORUM FUNDING**

Any monies acquired by the Forum shall only be used to help achieve the aims and objectives of the Forum as set out in Section 2 of the Constitution including the commissioning of advisory services, surveys or any other activity.

The Steering Group will be responsible for determining the financial management of the Forum. The treasurer shall keep proper account of the finances of the Forum, where necessary supported by receipts and invoices. The annual accounts of the Forum shall be subject to independent audit. All

funds will be held by Werrington Community Association in a bank account accessed by two out of three signatures

#### **8. COMPLAINTS**

Any complaint about the behaviour of a member of the Forum, Steering Group or sub-groups in relation to work undertaken shall be made in confidence, in writing to the Secretary unless the complaint is about the secretary in which case it shall be made to the Chair. The elected members of the Forum will investigate the complaint and decide on action as appropriate. If the complaint concerns the officers themselves, other members of the Forum will be appointed in their place. Appeal will be held by three members of the Board who have not been involved in investigating the complaint or determining action.

#### **9. VALUES**

All members of the Forum shall act in the best interest of the Forum in any meetings of the Forum, the Steering Group and any Task or Working Groups. In any AGM, Open Group or Steering Group meetings a member must declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest which may render said member unable to vote on the particular issue or issues under discussion, unless the members present unanimously agree that the declaration does not preclude the member from voting. The Forum will comply with all relevant equality and anti-discrimination legislation and shall not discriminate against any persons on grounds of race, nationality, gender, sexuality, religion or age. The Forum being part of Werrington Neighbourhood Council shall be subject to the Council's Equality and Child Protection policy.

#### **10. ALTERATION OF CONSTITUTION**

This constitution can only be changed at an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting of the Forum. Any change to the Constitution requires a simple majority of votes of the members present and will be communicated to Forum Members as described in Section 5 of this Constitution.

#### **11. EXTENDING LIFE OF THE FORUM**

The Forum shall exist for a period of five years from its formal designation by Peterborough City Council and before the expiration of its five year life, it will give consideration to establishing a continuing or successor organisation to maintain and monitor Werrington Neighbourhood Plan.

#### **12. DISBANDING OF FORUM**

The Forum can be disbanded by a majority vote and if no successor organisation is established, any remaining funds after all bills and charges have been settled shall be returned to the provider from which the funds were received. No individual member of the Forum shall benefit from the dispersal.